

## **Fire Watch in Health Care Facilities Memorandum**

To: Health Care Section Staff

From: Pat Day Rainey

Date: July 15, 2002 - Revised

Inspector shall cite the following deficiency on inspection/reinspection report when a required fire alarm/sprinkler system is not operative:

R.S. 40:1578.6 (C)

This inspector deems that a serious life hazard exists due to the lack of a required operative (fire alarm system/sprinkler system). Therefore the 2000 edition of the life safety code shall be implemented as per the following:

NFPA 101:9.6.1.8 (F.A.) - K 51 or 9.7.6.1 (A.S.) - K 56

“Where a required fire alarm/sprinkler system is out of service for more than 4 hours in a 24-hour period the authority having jurisdiction shall be notified. The facility shall be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided.”

Facility shall implement a fire watch in accordance with State Fire Marshal Guidelines, a copy of said guidelines given to (name of person signing report) and said fire watch shall remain in effect until the system is back in service and an inspection has been conducted by this office. **(In the correction date column put the next days date that the facility is open to the public followed by the time that the facility opens to the public on that date : 24 hour facilities will be handled on a case by case basis)**

**The inspector shall notify the Administrator of the facility immediately upon knowledge of the fire alarm system, automatic sprinkler system or generator not being operational. The administrator shall immediately notify licensed personnel to initiate repair of the non-operational system. The inspector shall notify the DHH Survey Team Leader, Administrator and your Supervisor that the facility may be in immediate jeopardy and the inspector has ordered a fire watch. If the non-operational system can be repaired prior to the inspector leaving the facility, the immediate jeopardy would be lifted. If the non-operational system is not repaired, the fire watch shall be in place prior to the inspector leaving the facility and immediate jeopardy would be lifted. The deficiency shall be written, even if it is corrected. Notify your Supervisor to discuss scope and severity of the deficiency written.**

If a subsequent inspection by the state fire marshal inspector finds that the facility has not been evacuated or a fire watch has not been implemented as per state fire marshal guidelines, the facility shall be ordered to cease and desist operation and not reopen until a fire watch is being conducted by an independent third party such as the local fire department having jurisdiction or an independent agency capable of performing the function.

**Note: Person signing report shall be someone of authority; Administrator, Manager, Owner**

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY FIRE WATCH IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

In the event that a fire alarm system, sprinkler system or generator is determined to be not in working order for more than (4) four hours in a (24) twenty four hour period, the following actions shall be taken by the facility or the building shall be vacated:

1. Notify the State Fire Marshal Health Care Section at 1 (800) 256-5452 or fax number (225) 925-3699, the local fire department and all facility personnel, in writing, that the fire alarm system/sprinkler system is not operational.
2. Establish a temporary fire watch by **qualified individuals\* who are dedicated solely to the fire watch duty**. The name(s) of the person(s) comprising the fire watch shall be maintained in the facility for review by inspection/survey personnel.
3. A fire watch shall be established to:
  - (a) Prevent entry of unauthorized persons.
  - (b) Control the activities of people authorized to be on the property, but who are not aware of procedures established for the prevention of fire.
  - (c) Control pedestrian and vehicular traffic throughout the normal working day as directed by management, and during exit drills, and evacuation of the property due to emergencies.
  - (d) Control gates and vehicular traffic to facilitate access to the property by the public fire department, members of any private fire brigades, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and off-duty management personnel in the event of fire and other emergencies.
4. Provide fire watch personnel with a means of identifying themselves as authorized representatives of the facility.
5. Each route to be covered by fire watch personnel shall be designed by the facility and approved by the State Fire Marshal Inspector. The route shall be explicitly defined to ensure that the fire watch personnel patrols the correct area.
6. The fire watch personnel assigned to each route shall be provided with instructions, all details regarding route, and the functions to be carried out in covering the route.
7. Fire watch personnel shall make rounds at one-half hour intervals. **During the rounds, the fire watch personnel shall make thorough inspections of all buildings or spaces including concealed areas, such as attics, unoccupied storage areas, etc.** Upon completion of the individual round, fire watch personnel shall sign a log sheet maintained in the facility administrative office or other location approved by this office.

8. Procedures shall be established for orderly conduct of the operations at the property, including procedures for fire loss prevention both by employees of the property protected and by outside contractors, and the prompt reporting of any fires discovered by calling the public fire department and the fire brigade of the property (if available on the shift).
9. Each facility shall establish programs for fire watch personnel to ensure they are familiar with the facility being protected, including:
  - (a) All buildings, occupancies, and hazards.
  - (b) Fixed fire protection systems.
  - (c) Manual and/or automatic detection and alarm systems.
  - (d) Portable fire protection equipment.
  - (e) Emergency shutdown procedures and equipment for which they are responsible.
  - (f) The facility emergency action plan
10. Each facility shall ensure that fire watch personnel are familiar with the site-specific emergency plans for dealing with fires and other emergencies.
11. Each facility shall ensure that fire watch personnel are familiar with the procedures to follow in the recognition and reporting of an emergency, including:
  - (a) When and how to use radio equipment, telephone, and private or public alarm boxes to summon aid.
  - (b) How to notify the fire brigade, the municipal fire department, and other emergency response organizations.
  - (c) The personnel to be contacted.
12. Fire watch personnel shall be provided with a means for continuous communication (i.e., two way radio; walkie-talkies; etc.) with a constantly attended location such as the facility administrative office where a public address announcement can be made throughout all buildings in the event of an emergency.\*\*
13. Each facility manager/administrator shall ensure that:
  - (a) Fire watch personnel are not permitted to change the time record charts.
  - (b) The changing and review of time record charts is done by the manager/administrator or the manager/administrator's responsible designee.
  - (c) Time record charts of fire watch personnel are promptly reviewed.
  - (d) Files are maintained for review by representatives of any authority having jurisdiction.
  - (e) All irregularities are investigated, recorded, and corrective action is taken.

14. A continuously updated directory of names, telephone numbers, and other information to assist in making emergency calls shall be kept at the facility's administrative office. This directory shall include the telephone numbers of key facility personnel to be notified in an emergency, fire, police and emergency medical service departments, and other outside agencies needed in an emergency.

**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE DURATION OF THE TEMPORARY FIRE WATCH WILL BE DETERMINED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. A TEMPORARY FIRE WATCH MAY ONLY BE LIFTED BY THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE.**

**\*Qualified Individual:** It shall be the responsibility of management to ensure that fire watch personnel have been trained to perform all functions of a fire watch as defined in this document.

**Note:** Local ordinances may require the fire department having jurisdiction to conduct the fire watch; however the fire watch guidelines as stated in this document shall be implemented.

**\*\*** In buildings or areas of the building without public address systems, there **shall** be a designated person(s) equipped with a communication device (radio, walkie-talkie) to initiate emergency call and evacuation procedures.